

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 /090 W  
-----029828 070549Z /20

R 061446Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2421  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIURT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USMISSION USUN NY  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4642

NKKO. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS  
SUBJECT: HERUT PARTY DISSATISFACTION WITH ITS LEADERSHIP AND ITS  
ALLIANCE WITH THE LIBERALS

SUMMARY: TWO WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS IN THE HERUT AND  
LIBERAL PARTIES HAVE TOLD US OF GROWING DISSATISFACTION  
AT THEIR LEVEL WITH BEGIN'S LEADERSHIP. THEY ARE ALSO  
CONCERNED ABOUT THE MOUNTING FACTIONAL CONFLICTS WITHIN  
LIKUD OVER BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY AND THE  
NEGLECT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF HERUT AND THE  
LIBERALS. HERUT DISSATISFACTION IS MANIFESTING ITSELF  
MOST NOTABLY IN A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN SEEKING THE REMOVAL  
OF ACTING PARTY CHAIRMAN ACHECHTERMAN. THE LIKUD FACTION  
IN THE HISTADRUT HAS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES SPLIT  
INTO SEPARATE HERUT AND LIBERAL GROUPS. IN SUM,  
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WORKING LEVEL PARTY ACTIVISTS FEEL THAT BEGIN MUST  
BE PERSUADED TO INTERVENE MORE ACTIVELY IN DIRECTING  
DOMESTIC POLICY AND STRAIGHTENING OUT PARTY AFFAIRS.  
END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING TO HERUT SPOKESMAN YOSSIE KANETTI, THE  
HERUT PARTY IS IN "A MOOD OF REVELT " AGAINST BEGIN'S

NEGLECT OF THE PARTY AND THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP. ALMOST HALF THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAVE SIGNED A PETITION TO HAVE ACTING PARTY CHAIRMAN AVRAHAM SCHECHTERMAN REMOVED FOR BEING INEFFECTUAL. SCHECHTERMAN WAS BEGIN'S CHOICE TO ACT AS PARTY CHAIRMAN (ALTHOUGH BEGIN HIMSELF REMAINS TITULAR CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY) AND SCHECHTERMAN'S POOR PERFORMANCE ITSELF REFLECTS UNFAVORABLY ON BEGIN. BY NEXT WEEKEND, THE MAJORITY ON THE COMMITTEE IS EXPECTED TO HAVE SIGNED THE PERITION, THUS FORCING BEGIN TO ACT. KANETTI CLAIMS THAT WITH LIKUD NEARLY ONE YEAR IN POWER AND FINANCIALLY RELATIVELY AFFLUENT, VIRTUALLY NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE TO BUILD UP HERUT PARTY MACHINERY. THERE ARE FEW FUNCTIONING PARTY BRANCHES, NO ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES AND NO PUBLICITY. THERE IS GROWING CONCERN AMONG HERUT MEMBERS THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS LACK OF ORGANIZATION THE ALIGNMENT MAY BE ABLE TO EMBARRASS THE LIKUD DURING THE NOVEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH REMAINING LOYAL TO BEGIN, HERUT INCREASINGLY BLAMES HIM FOR NEGLECTING HIS OWN PARTY BASE AND FOR NOT DEALING WITH THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES OF HERUT.

2. AS AN EXAMPLE OF RANK-AND-FILE DISSATISFACTION, KANETTI SAID THAT AT THE HERUT YOUTH SYMPOSIUM IN RAMAT GAN ON MARCH 31, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LIKUD WERE HEAVILY CRITICIZED. ALTHOUGH ATTENTION WAS CONCENTRATED  
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PRINCIPALLY ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, WEIZMAN AND SHARON (SEE TEL AVIV 4450), MUCH OF QUESTIONING FROM THE FLOOR WAS ALSO DIRECTED AGAINST BEGIN AND HIS NEGLECT OF HERUT. THE PARTICIPANTS ASKED WEIZMAN AND SHARON TO INFORM BEGIN OF THE GROWING DISSATISFACTION AND WARNED THEM THAT UNLESS THEY DID SOMETHING SOON THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE WELCOME IN THE DEVELOPMENT TOWNS. HERUT BRANCHES IN THESE COMMUNITIES FEEL THIS NEGLECT MOST SEVERELY AS WELL AS THE BLANDISHMENTS FROM THE ALIGNMENT, EXPECIALLY FROM THE KIBBUTZNIKS WHO ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN LOCAL POLITICS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4642

3. A SPECIAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 7 FOR THE HERUT FACTION OF HISTADRUT AT WHICH DEPUTY MINISTER YORAM ARIDOR, MINISTER DAVID LEVY, AND OTHER HERUT LEADERS WILL TRY TO CALM THE ATMOSPHERE OF REVOLT, WHICH IS ALSO DIRECTED AGAINST THE LIBERAL PARTY'S CONDUCT OF THE ECONOMY. WHILE THE HERUT FACTION OF THE HISTADRUT IS ONLY A FRACTION OF THE PARTY, ITS LEADERS FEAR THE REVOLT COULD SPREAD AS GRIEVANCES OVER INFLATION, THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY, BEGIN'S NEGLECT OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION, AND LIBERAL-HERUT RIVALRY CONTINUE TO MOUNT. THE LIBERAL AND HERUT FACTIONS IN THE HISTADRUT HAVE ALREADY BROKEN RELATIONS WITH EACH OTHER AND WILL HENCEFORTH ACT AS SEPARATE GROUPS. KANETTI FORESEES THE POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS STRIKES AFTER PASSOVER, WHICH WILL ADD TO THESE INTERNAL STRAINS WITHIN THE LIKUD.  
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4. DANIEL NACHMANY, A LIBERAL WHO CURRENTLY HEADS THE HISTADRUT LIKUD FACTION, CONFIRMS THE BITTERNESS THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS. BOTH KANETTI AND NACHMANY ARE FRUSTRATED THAT NEITHER EHRlich NOR BEGIN WILL INTERVENE IN FAVOR OF THEIR OWN PARTISANS AND BOTH PREDICT THAT UNLESS BEGIN ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY SOON AND ASSUMES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTY AFFAIRS AND THE CONDUCT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY, A SPLIT

MAY BECOME INEVITABLE. THEY ADMIT THAT THE ALIGNMENT IS NOT IN A POSITION TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY FEEL UNEASY ABOUT THEIR MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE. BOTH ARE ALSO SHARPLY CRITICAL OF BEGIN'S CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY, ALTHOUGH NACHMANY IS A DOVE AND KANETTI A HAWK. KANETTI, WHO IS CLOSE TO WEIZMAN, ADDS THAT THE COUNTRY MUST BE UNITED UNDER FIRM LEADERSHIP. HE FEARS THAT FOLLOWING THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, THE LABOR PARTY MAY HAVE SUFFICIENTLY RECOVERED THAT IT WILL EFFECTIVELY CHALLENGE BEGIN IF HE CONTINUES TO LET THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LIKUD DRIFT.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE REPORTED THESE WORKING LEVEL VIEWS AT SOME LENGTH BECAUSE THEY REFLECT THE TYPICAL REACTION WHENEVER TENSION AND UNCERTAINTIES RISE IN ISRAEL TO LOOK FOR SYMPTOMS OF AN IMPENDING REALIGNMENT OF THE COALITION AND THE OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, AN INHERENT INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA, THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF LIKUD'S OWN COALITION PARTNERS AND EVEN THE PROSPECT OF THE SEPARATE SURVIVAL OF THE LIBERALS AND HERUT MILITATE AGAINST AN EARLY CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT SO LONG AS BEGIN REMAINS AT ITS HEAD. CLEARLY THE LABOR ALIGNMENT IS WATCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION (SEE TEL AVIV 4409), BUT ITS  
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PASSWORD REMAINS "CAUTION" RATHER THAN A PRECIPITATE INITIATIVE. PERES HIMSELF SAID TO US APRIL 3 THAT HE FEELS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER) WILL BE DECIDED ON LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES, NOT NATIONAL ISSUES. HE TENDED AT THIS POINT IN TIME TO DOWNPLAY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AS LIKELY TO ASSIST LABOR IN RETURNING TO POWER.  
LEWIS

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